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PROMENADE

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"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views"

Constitution of the A.S.D.G.

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c/o Mayo.....(HO 2-6114).

It has been suggested that we reprint some of the material that has appeared in former issues of "Promenade". The following editorial is a reprint from Vol. 1, No. 6, which is as interesting as it is timely.

For those who fool that there is no longer a need for the old fashioned dancing classes at which the pupils were required to learn manners as well as figures, we should like to present some of our recent ponderings on this subject.

We are inclined to laugh merrily at the stiff mannerisms and rules for dance deportment, but a little thought will show these rules have a basis in courtesy which is as important today as it was in the "old days". Perhaps we may find ourselves laughing at some rule as:

"The gentleman approaches the lady offering his left hand, she places her right hand in his, then he extends his right arm in a direct line to the side, the forearm bent so as to form an acute angle."

You have visions of a dancing school, the dancing master touching the arm of a young gentleman and placing it in exactly the same acute angle.

But just a minute.....a little further on you find:

"It is very indecorous and out of place to give way to immoderate laughing sneering or commenting at those who are present. It certainly shows a want of refinement."

"It is very impolite and insulting for either lady or gentleman, while dancing in a quadrille, to mar the pleasure of

others by galloping!!"

Unfortunately, people have conceived the idea that folk dance parties in the city, or square dances in the country are arranged for the benefit of repressed individuals who use these occasions for the purpose of "raising a ruckus". Their behavior being particularly noticeable at many of these gatherings, they make the learning of new figures and enjoyment of old favorites almost impossible.

Though we never hope to see members of the American Square Dance Group or our guests behaving in a formal stilted manner, we still believe that folk dancing is more enjoyable when more perfectly done. There are some rules found in "Dancing and its relation to education and and Sound Life" by Allen Dodworth (first copyright 1885) which still hold today:

- 1-Alertness...each dancer being at all times awake to the duties required of him.
- 2-Promptness...in taking places for the execution of the figures.
- 3-Silence...and attention during the explanation of the figures.
- 4-Obedience...at all times to the prompter while leading dance.
- 5-Willingness...to sacrifice momentary personal pleasure so that others may gain.

This article is by way of a reminder to members of the Group, since we have certain very obvious duties to perform in carrying on the traditions of the folk-dance in America!

Francis James Child

Judy Friedman

"Do it so it shall never have to be done again."

People interested in ballads should consider themselves truly fortunate that Francis James Child was a firm adherent to this adage. We may thank him for making such a thorough search for all versions of English and Scottish Ballads, that another attempt on such a big scale need not be done again. Not only did he work on sources both oral and manuscript, but also on the comparative folklore and legend of the Continental languages. This bore fruit in his monumental work, "English and Scottish Popular Ballads."

This great effort in research was pursued along with a round of college duties that were his as a professor of literature at Harvard University. Most men would have considered that enough for an ordinary existence. Time had to be made, snatched, or stolen to keep up with his correspondence with scholars all over the world. Among them was James Russell Lowell, the friend who remained "James" to Child while he was Minister to the British Isles. A dear friend and neighbor, William James wrote in one of his letters, "I loved Child more than any man I knew" and in another, "I had often said that the best argument for immortal life was the existence of a man who deserved one as Child did."

This keen understanding of human nature helps to color the introductions and notes to his ballads and succeeds in making them really live. Songs that might seem just quaint and a wee bit stiff absorb vitality under Child's guidance and we realize that they deal with real people, true pictures, and honest passions.

In one of his letters he speaks of his few "superstitions," which he enumerates as "love of women, roses, popular poetry, Shakspeare, my friends, wild flowers, trees, violin music, voila!" Charles E.

Horton's comment on Child's character shortly after his death may easily fit: Child "was original, quaint, humorous, sweet, sympathetic, tender hearted and faithful."

His widow was able to throw some light on his "love of women," first on the list of autobiographical tributes. She said that as long as she had known Child his women friends were quite numerous; first near his own age then as he grew older, his acquaintances became younger. In Child's own words "loves of fourteen and under have always been delightful to me. When I was twenty-four I was a perfect victim to a girl of twelve. I should have been a voluminous producer, if I had not spent about half my life loving people."

Although he did not say as much, his love for his country could have been catalogued as one more "superstition." An example of this can be seen when it is noted that previous to Lincoln's reelection in 1864, he stopped all classes and distributed Republican ballots all day in front of Lyceum Hall. He did the same thing at the Congressional election of 1866. If Child had not been stamped "4F" because of the state of his eyes, no doubt he would have been in the ranks of the Union instead of distributing ballots. Even so he was undaunted. He served in a unique capacity by compiling "War Songs for Free Men," a Union Songbook. His literary friends, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier and Julia Ward Howe were among the verse contributors. Thin words were put to popular music and soldiers at the front actually sang them. So, if not with bullets, Child used the unusual combinations of ballads and ballots to serve his country during one of its critical periods.

Such a patriotic man in wartime seems of necessity to be extremely civic minded in peacetime as well. Although during most of Child's life he was a gentle person, he had a temper that somehow managed

(Continued on next page)

THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Marie Cuba

An interesting place to spend a rainy afternoon, and learn something about our Early Americana, is the New York Historical Society. The Society has owned a display of American Folk Arts since 1911, which is a long time before these arts were generally recognized, and it recently added many items to this growing collection. These are exhibited in a special standing collections, which include early American household utensils, beautiful examples of China, glassware, toys, jewelry, ironwork, textiles and a variety of furniture. The collection portrays the beginning and development of American artistic taste along with its European influences.

The Society was organized in 1804 to collect and preserve materials pertaining to the history of the United States and to New York in particular. It is the second oldest historical society in the United States. The building houses a museum devoted to Americana, with special emphasis on relics of Old New York, a gallery of American portraits and other paintings, an impressive gallery of old Masters, a reference library of American history, a manuscript collection covering all the periods of the country's past and a tremendous accumulation of old prints, and newspapers. Perhaps in this last section of newspapers and manuscripts lies a challenge for the ambitious filletist.

The Society is located on Central Park West between 76th and 77th Streets, and is open daily from 10 A.M.-5 P.M. The library is closed on Sunday, and the Art Gallery and Museum are closed on Monday.

(Second in series of articles)

CHILD (cont.)

to stick its head above water. But even when he spoke fiercely and insultingly he had a way of leaving his opponent in control of his own behavior. In the 1880's Professor Child was a persistent reformer of city politics. He tried to attend the caucuses and other public meetings at which candidates were nominated for office in Cambridge, or at which measures for city reform were made. To say he was outspoken at these meetings would be

speaking mildly indeed. At a meeting in 1886, to nominate members of the Common Council, he spoke so hotly against the current Irish boss, and in such a derogatory manner of the boss himself, that his friends elected themselves as temporary bodyguards and silently closed in on him. In the vestibule of the building, the boss, so vigorously denounced by Child, came over with a bunch of cigars in his hand. "Have a cigar Professor. Don't you smoke?" "Yes, I do. I can match you in any of your little vices." The bodyguard inconspicuously dissolved and disappeared in the crowd.

All in all, Professor Child worked and overworked to the last. Aside from creating his monumental collection of ballads, Child edited various editions of the work of Chaucer and Spenser, and even wrote an opera named "One Fishball!".

He died in 1896, leaving a devoted wife, formerly Elizabeth Sedgewick of Stockbridge and four lovely children.

His collection of ballads was complete except for a general introduction and a bibliography. This was made, along with an excellent biographical profile, by his pupil, friend, and successor- George Lyman Kittredge who was an outstanding scholar in his own right.

The next issue of Promenade will have a special article on the Ballad Opera.

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HULL'S VICTORY

A New England dance collected by Margot Mayo in 1935.

Formation: A longways set for six or more couples. The ladies form one line, and the gents form a line opposite them. Every other couple is active. When a couple reaches the head or foot of the set, they stand by for one repetition of the dance, and become active or inactive as the case may be.

Music: Hull's Victory

CALLS:

- 1) Right hands to your partner and half-way 'round.
- 2) Balance four in line.
- 3) Turn your opposites.
- 4) Turn your partners.
- 5) Balance four in line.
- 6) Active couples swing in the center.
- 7) Down the center and back.
- 8) Right and left with the couple above.

Descriptions:

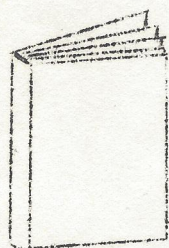
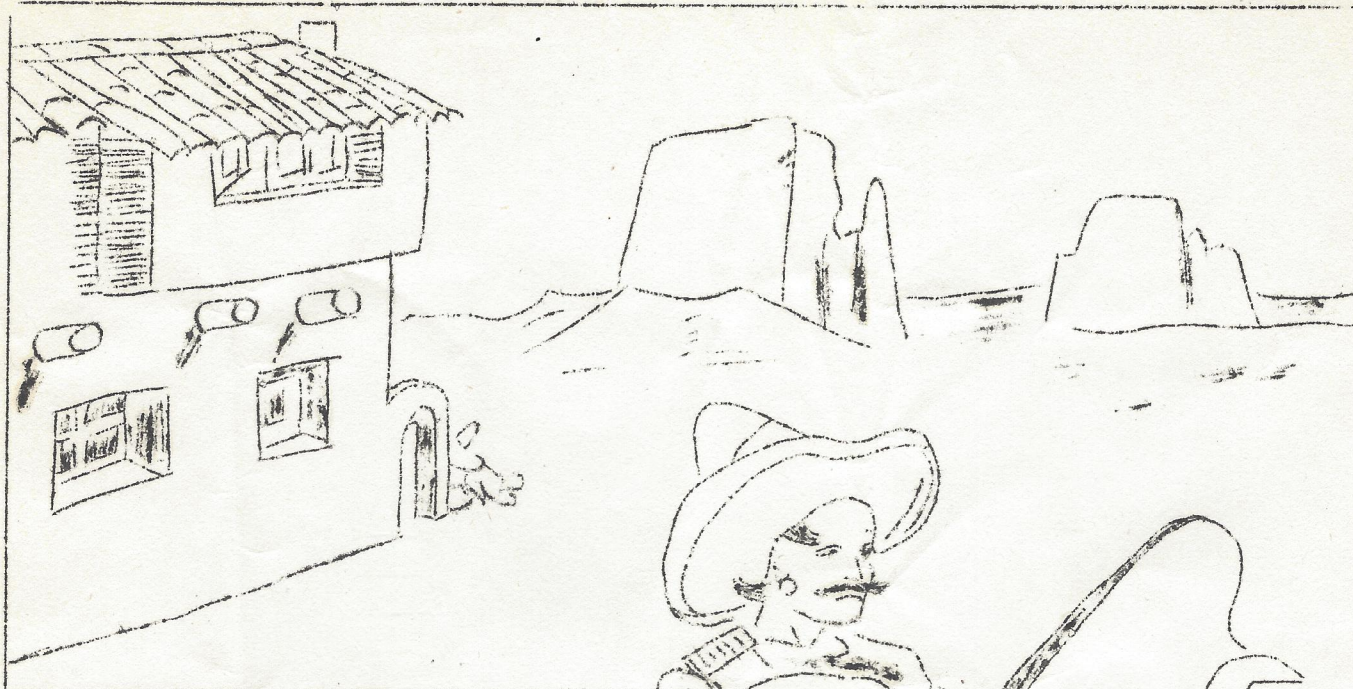
- 1) The active couples join right hands in the center of the set and turn half-way around. The active lady joins left hands with the inactive gent below her original position; the active gent joins left hands with the inactive lady below his original position. Thus, all the gents will be facing down the set, and all the ladies will be facing up the set.
- 2) With hands still joined, all the dancers do either:
 - a- A regular balance step. Stepping first on the right foot and swinging the left foot across the right, and then stepping on the left and swinging the right foot across the left.
 - b- An improvised jig step, with lots of noise to imitate gunfire.
- 3) The active lady turns once around with the inactive gent - still holding left hands; the active gent turns once around with inactive lady - still holding left hands.
- 4) Active couple meets in center of set, turn once around with right hands, ending in same position as 2).
- 5) Repeat 2).
- 6) Active couple swing in center of set for six measures.
- 7) Active couples, in skating position, promenade down the set for eight counts. Active couples turn as a couple, and promenade back up the set. Active couples fall into line below the couple they just danced with.
- 8) Active couples, with the couples they just danced with, advance across the set, passing in the center with the ladies between the gents. On reaching the opposite side, each couple (two gents, two ladies) turns, joining inside hands and simply turning around. Repeat across the set. Each active couple has now moved down one place and is ready to repeat the dance.

HULL'S VICTORY

The dance and the music originated in New England in honor of Admiral Isaac Hull's victory over the British in that famous battle between the Constitution and the larger better armed Guerriere. The battle took place on August 19, 1812, and it was here that the Constitution earned its name "Old Ironsides." In the dance the stamping of the feet represents the salvos of gunfire by the Constitution and the patriotic fervor of the fighting men. We herein reproduce the music to that same dance.

arranged by H. Neviasky

The musical score is arranged in four systems, each consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests. The bass staff frequently contains chords and rests, while the treble staff has more active melodic lines. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.



BOOK

REVIEW

by John A. Scott

Mexican Border Ballads and Other Folklore
Ed. Rody C. Boatright, Publication of the
Texas Folk Lore Society, Austin: 1946.

This little book is a collection of articles on Mexican, Indian, and Southern folk lore. From our point of view the most interesting of these is "Corridos of the Mexican Border," by Brownie McNeil. Mr. McNeil has spent much time in Mexico and in Southern Texas collecting and recording folk songs; and this paper presents some of the results of his very interesting researches.

The corrido, Mr. McNeil tells us, is the New World version of the old-type Spanish narrative known as romance. It is, he says, "...the ballad of the indio and the mestizo, voicing their admiration for characters who live and die in violence, characters who have dared lash out against oppressing forces in society, and have thereby won the admiration of the folk who are oppressed by these same forces."

Mr. McNeil gives us many delightful examples of the corrido, taken from different periods in the stormy history of the Southern Texas and border folk. There is the ballad immortalizing Heraclio Bernal, the Robin Hood of Mexico in the



1880's; there is the ballad of the immigrant laborers, signed up on the border for railroad work in Kansas:

Trabajamos noche y día
Más deban de comer
Solo purita sandía.

"We worked day and night," they sing, "all they gave us to eat was plain water-melon." There is, lastly, the lament of the smuggler in the prohibition era, caught by the U.S. patrol and sent off to "Livenvor." (Leavenworth) All these songs, it is interesting to note, are in 6-8 time using the simplest of rhythmic patterns.

Mr. McNeil makes the interesting point that, while the corrido is descended from the Spanish romance, it has a form and content peculiarly its own. The themes, however, have much in common with the traditional folk songs of the people in Spain under Bourbon oppression.